



VISION 2020 FISCAL RESOURCES TASK GROUP
Meeting Minutes 7:30 PM 1_19_17

Senior Center First Floor Conference Room

ATTENDEES: Gordon Jamieson (Co-Chair), David Gabarino (Co-Chair), Brian Hasbrouck, Heather Remoff, Pete Howard (Secretary), Vision 2020 Chair Juli Brazile

WELCOME: We welcomed Juli and introduced ourselves.

DISCUSSION OF TOWN GOAL: Juli is asking each task group how the Standing Committee could help the task group (Ref 1). In particular, she asked if the FRTG goal should be updated. Gordon, supported by the group, reviewed some of the changes that FRTG has advocated over the years, the process that the committee follows, and the committee's outreach to key employees. The group responded unanimously to Juli's request that there remains much that can be improved in the way fiscal planning is done in Arlington and in the visibility of residents into this process. Members stated that they considered these efforts well within the scope of the goal. In addition, as time goes by and personnel change, residents must remain vigilant to be sure there is no backsliding.

Members noted that a review of the kind Juli requested was carried out shortly after the first Vision 2020 Chair resigned. At that time, the FRTG goal was confirmed.

Concerning what the Standing Committee could do for FRTG, there were a few ideas. Publicity would be helpful. There is a continuing need for new members, probably for all task groups. Task force morale might be reinforced if a more formal report from task group to standing committee, perhaps annually was requested.

TOWN FINANCIAL & ORGANIZATION MATERIALS: Gordon repeated his vision of a more coherent way for a resident, especially a new resident, to learn about how the Town operates. Juli said the the Community Education Program is planning a series of talks for newcomers. She also said that the Town Manager is investigating Citizens Academy, an educational program that Lexington uses. Gordon will discuss this with the Manager. Perhaps it would provide a skeleton that the FRTG could build on. Gordon listed his view of the scope of these materials as follows:

- Town Organization
- Town Manager/Selectmen
- School Committee
- Independent Reporting Authorities (Assessors, Treasurer, Comptroller)
- Budget Process
- Appropriation Process
- Resources
- Standing Committees

NEXT MEETING: 2_16_17
Meetings monthly - 3rd Thursdays 7:30 PM - Usually in Senior Center

Ref 1 Task Group Discussion
Ref 2 Article 7. Fiscal Resources

Task Group Discussion

The town goals that Vision 2020 is based on were originally passed by Town Meeting as the culmination of a multi-year effort in 1992. The original intention was that these goals, along with the strategies and actions identified in the 1992 report to Town Meeting, would be re-examined every 3 to 5 years and updated. That process never happened. We are proposing that over the next several years the Vision 2020 Standing Committee and Task Groups work together to run a public process to update the goals and create a new set of vision statements/resolutions to be affirmed by Town Meeting. These may have the same names as the current goals or after public consideration they may be changed as well. We have already been asked to split Culture and Recreation into two goals. And some goals like Communications do not take modern technology or other changes into account. We don't feel strongly that this process has to be as exhaustive as the previous one, but it should include any stakeholders who want to participate and be open to the public.

What suggestions do you have for the design of a public process to update your goal?

Can the Standing Committee help with funding for any of your current projects?

Do you need help in other ways?

What do you see as the positives and negatives of the current relationship between task groups and Vision 2020?

ARTICLE 7. FISCAL RESOURCES

GOAL: We value Arlington's efficient delivery of public services providing for the common good. The benefits from these services and the responsibility of taxation will be equitably distributed among us. We will be known for our sound fiscal planning and for the thoughtful, open process by which realistic choices are made in our Town.

STRATEGY 1. Build citizen confidence in Arlington's ability to deliver efficient economical Town services via citizen involvement.

- ACTION A.** Make Arlington's governmental and school planning, budgeting, spending, and taxing processes more understandable for the average citizen. Use innovative techniques to get the message across:
- Develop a "Fiscal Information Resource Guide" and other information and educational materials.
 - Hold informative seminars on fiscal resources in Town Hall.

- ACTION B.** Measure Town service levels regularly against agreed upon, public-stated, short-term and long-term performance goals. Widely publicize the results in the Town.

STRATEGY 2. Provide information about fiscal policy issues and plans in a way appropriate to particular audiences.

STRATEGY 3. Maintain an active citizen and Town management involvement to investigate the financial benefits of delivering services regionally.

STRATEGY 4. Explore more equitable methods of revenue generation beyond our current real estate tax system.

STRATEGY 5. Investigate a long-range revenue policy to fully implement the intent of Proposition 2 1/2.

OUR COMMUNICATION MODEL IS:

